



District 7

Michael R. Millsap
District Director

March 25, 2020

Speaker of the House Todd Huston
200 W. Washington St
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear Speaker of the House Todd Huston

I'm writing to you on behalf of the members of the United Steelworkers union (USW) in Indiana. Right now, our nation is facing an unprecedented health care crisis that has exposed the weaknesses of our worker protections and health care systems and is inflicting a heavy toll on the economy.

We know that you are working hard to protect public health and ensure that the spread of the virus is slowed and eventually stopped. That is our goal as well. One important tool in our collective response is guaranteeing that sick workers are able to stay home and prevent infecting others.

Earlier this month, the U.S. Congress passed the *Families First Coronavirus Response Act*. This law provides a tax credit for employers and guarantees employees 80 hours of paid sick leave if they are isolated or quarantined by a medical professional, seeking diagnosis for symptoms of COVID-19, or caring for a sick individual or child whose school is closed due to government orders. **However, the law exempts large employers with over 500 employees in the United States.**

The vast majority of large employers – 89 percent according to the Department of Labor – provide some form of paid sick leave to their employees, with an average of eight days, which is short of the 14-day quarantine recommendation.¹ Republicans and Democrats in Washington, D.C. agreed that large companies should not benefit from a federal tax incentive from something that should already be provided with or without a global pandemic.

Many USW members have access to *some* paid sick leave, but not enough to stay home for the length of time required to prevent infecting others. Since the passage of the federal law, our

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members who work at large employers are reporting that these employers are NOT consistently providing paid leave equal to or exceeding 80 hours for coronavirus quarantine, isolation, and recovery.

In an effort to stop the spread of this virus, we urge you to use your authority to change the law in Indiana to:

- Require that all employers, regardless of size, provide 80 hours of paid sick leave to full-time employees, consistent with the requirements for smaller firms in the federal *Families First Coronavirus Response Act*. Companies with fewer than 500 employees must comply under federal law and have access to a tax credit to help with those costs.
- Ensure that this requirement goes above and beyond the existing sick leave provisions already existing in collective bargaining agreements.
- Protect employees consistent with federal law and prohibit:
 - Requirements that employees use other paid leave before using this leave,
 - Requirements that employees must find a replacement to cover his or her scheduled work hours,
 - Retaliation against any employee who takes this leave, and
 - Retaliation against any employee who files a complaint or engages in efforts to enforce paid sick leave requirements.

Again, paid sick days are essential to ensuring that sick individuals stay home and prevent exposing others in their workplace. Not all companies are acting responsibly and guaranteeing this leave to workers. **Indiana must protect public health and fill in the gaps in the federal law on ensuring that all employees have access to coronavirus-related paid sick days.** We urge you to take swift action on this matter.

Sincerely,


Michael Millsap

District 7 Director

United Steelworkers International

1301 Texas St 2nd Floor Room 200

Gary, IN 46402

219-881-6208



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Senate President Pro Tempore Rodric Bray
200 W. Washington St
Indianapolis, IN 46204

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House Minority Leader Phil GiaQuinta
200 W. Washington St
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear House Minority Leader Phil GiaQuinta

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Senate Minority Floor Leader Tim Lanane
200 W. Washington St
Indianapolis, IN 46204

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Governor
Eric J. Holcomb
200 W. Washington St Rm 206
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear Governor Holcomb

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